

Representative

Bob

SUMP



1997 Legislative Review

Serving Ferry, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane and Stevens counties

7th District



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Committees
Natural Resources, vice chair
Agriculture and Ecology
Education

Dear Neighbors:

By the time this reaches you, the 1997 legislative session will have been over for weeks, but for me it is still a very vivid memory. As a freshman in the Legislature, I was struck by the enormity of the job and by the high quality of the hard-working and dedicated people who devise the laws that govern our state.

One of the things I learned was how slow the process of change can be. Our democratic process is designed to move slowly, because our founding fathers in their wisdom realized that it takes time for people to accept new ideas or get comfortable with major changes.

I sponsored more bills than I thought I would, and I'm pleased that six of them passed both houses and were signed by the governor. Some of them are mentioned in this newsletter. But some of the bills that you may not know about, and which did not pass the Legislature this session, may actually represent my greatest service to my constituents in the 7th District.

You did not get a gasoline tax increase, you do not have to put gun locks on all of your firearms, you do not have to get fingerprinted to get a driver's license, and our nonprofit hospitals are not paying business and occupation taxes on Medicaid receipts. I had a major role in defeating these issues. So, as you can see, a legislator can be productive by working to defeat bills as well as by working to pass them.

Since this was my first session representing you in Olympia, I am anxious to get your reactions to what we accomplished. For those who have questions, comments or concerns, I invite you to call my office at (360) 786-7908.

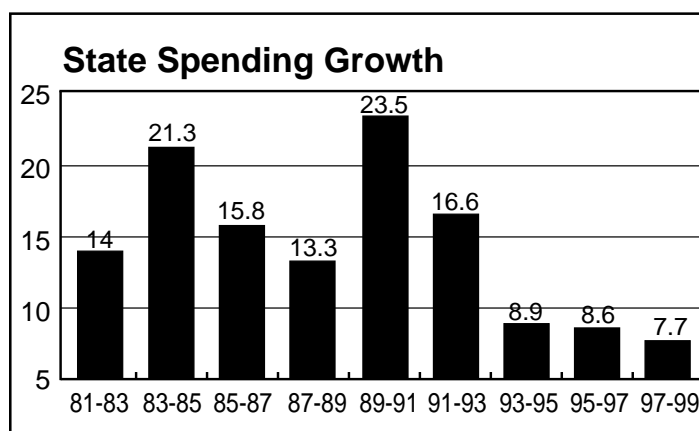
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Sump".

Bob Sump
State Representative

THE BUDGET AND EDUCATION

I did not vote for the General Fund budget. I believe that the people of the 7th District elected me to help cut state spending so I could not in good conscience vote for any budget that failed to do so. The budget which was finally adopted, however, did reflect the smallest increase in a biennial budget in 25 years. With total spending of \$19.07 billion over the next two years, the new budget represents an increase of 7.7 percent over the current level, more than \$100 million below the limit established by Initiative 601.



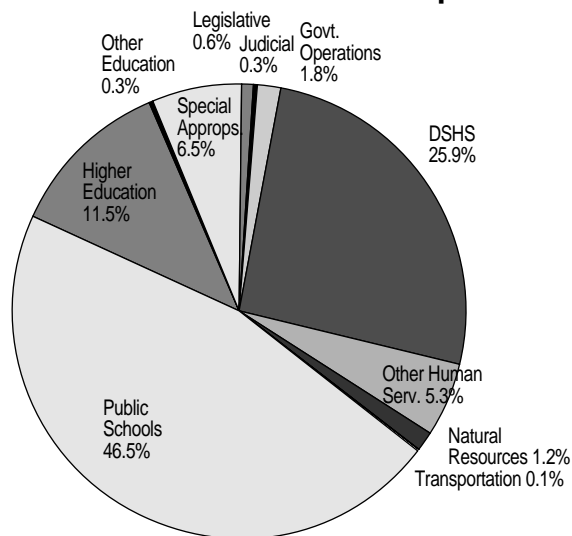
The budget makes education the first priority. Funding for K-12 education is the largest item, about \$8.9 billion — an increase of more than 7 percent, and the budget includes approximately \$2.2 billion for higher education.

This was a major step in improving the quality of higher education and access to our colleges and universities. It increased higher education enrollment by about 6,400, of which 4,200 are at community and technical colleges around the state where the greatest demand and need have been identified. In addition, it continued support for workforce training programs at the two-year colleges to serve up to 7,200 individuals.

One new program I'm really pleased about is the Washington Advanced College Tuition Payment Program, which will allow families to buy "tuition units," redeemable for future tuition at a Washington

institution of higher learning at no additional cost. A parent or grandparent could buy one or more units costing as little as \$30 and the money would go into a special account held by the state treasurer. The funds would be invested and managed by the state Investment Board, with the income generated used to offset increases in tuition during the time between buying the tuition units and the time they are redeemed.

1997-99 General Fund-State Expenditures



Going along with this idea of making higher education more accessible to more people, the Legislature increased student financial aid to help students from low- and middle-income families.

WELFARE REFORM: The Legislature and governor agreed on a reform plan that puts a five-year cap on benefits, compared to the unlimited benefits of today's system. Our plan will require people receiving benefits to work, seek employment, or perform specified work activities. Those who don't find work will undergo a skills and needs assessment and a plan will be developed to help them become self-sufficient and employed.

JUVENILE CRIME: The continuing increase in violent juvenile crime is the greatest threat to the safety of the people, families and neighborhoods throughout Washington. This year we succeeded in

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enacting a juvenile justice reform measure that makes the most significant changes in 20 years. Our proposal provides greater flexibility for prosecutors and judges to deal with juvenile offenders. Our reform plan also provides stricter punishment for older teenagers who commit the most serious crimes by allowing them to be tried and sentenced as adults.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF: We passed property tax relief and reform to save the owner of a \$110,000 home as much as \$23,000 over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Our plan also would provide protection from huge assessment increases, offering lasting protection for homeowners by setting a stricter limit on annual levy increases at all levels of government. In response to the governor's veto of this measure, we passed a referendum to let the public vote on the issue this fall.

B & O TAX RELIEF: We completed repeal of the massive B&O tax increases imposed in 1993. Some of the small-business people targeted for those increases saw their taxes increase by 66 percent. Despite promises to support the B&O tax roll back, the governor refused to sign the repeal measure unless relief was delayed another year.

HUMAN SERVICES: Through a combination of increased funding and responsible changes in operation of the Basic Health Plan for low-income people we not only ensured the solvency and stability of the system that now serves 130,000 individuals and families, we also expanded enrollment by 8,000 to increase access to affordable health insurance. We insisted on avoiding any gimmicks or quick fixes that would leave the BHP in danger of collapse.

The budget also includes funds to improve the care, treatment and safety of foster children. And we improved services to children and families.

Also included in the budget are funds to strengthen long-term care, improve the safety of nursing home residents, and strengthen mental health programs.



Rep. Sump explains his position on a bill being discussed in committee.

DISPLACED TIMBER WORKERS BENEFITS

One disappointment we had was House bill 1201, which provides extended unemployment benefits to our displaced timber and salmon workers. It was the very last bill we considered this session and we had the Senate version in hand which provides extended benefits, as well as provides benefits for secondary and tertiary employees of those industries for eight counties. Then we resurrected the House version of the bill at the very last minute just before session was to be over, and it would have extended benefits to 14 counties. In our district, only Ferry and Stevens counties were in the original proposal. But then on the expanded version, secondary and tertiary benefits would have been extended to Okanogan and Pend Oreille counties. A floor fight erupted on the merits of the bill with minutes to go before the end of session and by the time we could get this bill passed, the Senate had already adjourned so we could not send it back to them for concurrence and we ended up with the Senate version which was more limited in scope than the House version. But if in the future Pend Oreille County qualifies under the formula, workers there would receive benefits. So there is still hope



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that more workers in our area will eventually receive extended unemployment benefits.

SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION I SPONSORED THAT BECAME LAW

- **HOUSE BILL 1433** allows local Eastern Washington counties to rent Martin Hall on the grounds of Eastern State Hospital at Medical Lake from the state Department of Social and Health Services for 50 years for \$1 a year. This clears the way for the use of Martin Hall, which is now being renovated for the purpose, as a juvenile detention facility.
- **HOUSE BILL 1465** establishes a no-cost consulting service within the Department of Ecology (DOE) to assist miners, landholders, local governments and the public in technical matters related to mining regulations.
- **HOUSE BILL 1466** concerns gravel pits and aggregate-type surface mining. It says the state can delegate to counties the right to regulate such operations, if they have the ability to do so. It reduces the layers of bureaucracy that operators have to go through and gives some local control back to our counties.

- **HOUSE BILL 1467** cuts some of the red tape involved in posting performance bonds for surface mining operations. This bill simply streamlines the process of posting performance bonds. By posting one performance bond with the Department of Natural Resources, a company could not be forced to post a bond with local government agencies.

CALL ME IF YOU NEED HELP OR HAVE IDEAS TO SHARE.

Part of my job is helping you when you have a problem with state government. If you need assistance in dealing with a state agency, please call me.

I also want to thank everyone who contacted me during the session. Hearing your thoughts, ideas and concerns is critical if I am to effectively represent you in the Legislature.

If you need to get in touch, please contact my Olympia office at (360) 786-7908 or call the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000 to express your views on any matter of state concern.

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